

# ACADEMIES OFFER KIDS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE POTENTIAL PROFESSIONS

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BDN file photo Hendricks CareerTek Construction Academy attendees carry a planter box during a construction academy last summer. Students built planter boxes for the city and picnic tables for the Beloit Fire Department. This spring and summer CareerTek has an array of free academies for students.

BELOIT - Parents looking to keep their kids challenged this summer might want to consider sending them to one of CareerTek's many free academies. CareerTek will be holding the day-long academies on career exploration in fields ranging from coding and medical services to military aviation.

"These are fun, engaging and hands-on learning opportunities that fall under a career umbrella. As young people start to think about their futures, it's a great way to explore and to learn and work alongside people who are in the profession. The beautiful thing is we have people from those professions participating and leading our professional academies," said Hendricks CareerTek Business and Education Director Tina Salzman.

Located at 625 Third St., Suite 300 in the Ironworks Complex, Hendricks CareerTek offers a unique space for employers and students to intersect. It provides students with workshops and educational opportunities in high-demand career fields such as coding, healthcare, construction and trades, manufacturing, entrepreneurship and more.

The opportunities are open to kids in the Greater Beloit area. Ages for the academies vary, but they are usually geared toward middle and high school age students.

The summer academies feature hands-on activities to expose students to a variety of careers. In the fire science and construction academies, for example, students learn how to safely use tools of the profession.

Last year, construction students built picnic tables for the fire department and planter boxes for the city. This year the girls construction academy as well as the general construction and engineering academy students will be building buddy benches to give to area schools.

Because of last year's success with the construction and fire science academies, Salzman said those at CareerTek wanted to offer more opportunities.

In addition to the various academies, CareerTek has an ongoing program called Girls Who Code, to introduce girls in grades 6-12 to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields such as coding. It started April 9 and will continue until the end of June. Students meet from 4 - 5:30 p.m. on Mondays.

Other academies will be held throughout the summer. They include: construction/engineering, beginning and advanced coding, medical sciences, advanced construction, military aviation, entrepreneurship and four fire ops academies covering different topics.

Salzman encourages people to sign up for academies. In the event there are no spots left, she tells people to get on the waiting list. If there is enough interest, more sessions could be added.